



Exeter Community Initiatives

Policy Name:	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
Adopted by Council:	September 2014
Last Review:	June 2017
Next Review:	June 2018

The Trustees in adopting this policy fully understand their legal obligations and the importance of monitoring and implementing the policy within ECI.

EXETER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (ECI)
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
(Revised December 2015)

1. Background

1.1 ECI is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Throughout this policy, ECI refers to the organisation as a whole that comprises the work of the individual projects and any support services that are provided corporately.

2. Statement of Intent

2.1 This policy has been written with the aim of ensuring that all children and young people accessing any of the services provided by ECI, whether accompanied by a parent/carer or left in the care of ECI staff or volunteers, are safe and free from the threat of harm.

2.2 ECI wishes to take every possible precaution in order to protect all children and young people with whom we work from the threat of child abuse. Any suspicion of harm will be responded to promptly and appropriately in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

3. Responsibility for Policy

3.1 The trustees of ECI are ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is regularly reviewed and properly implemented.

3.2 In practice, the day to day responsibility for ensuring that any concern about the welfare of a child involved in an ECI activity is dealt with appropriately lies initially with the relevant Project Manager (where appropriate), and ultimately with the ECI Chief Executive and the Safeguarding Lead. This is the case whether the person suspected of abusing the child is an ECI employee or volunteer or someone else outside the organisation.

3.3 However, it is now widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from harm. ECI recognises that anyone who has contact with children may be abusive in their actions. ECI also recognises that anyone who has regular contact with children may be a link in identifying where a child needs protection. The organisation will therefore ensure that staff and volunteers working with children realise it is their responsibility to act on their concerns. The organisation will provide them with the support needed to follow through the process of raising concerns.

4. Child Protection Procedures

4.1 All staff will know and understand ECI Child Protection Policy and Procedure and will sign a copy of the Child Protection Policy to confirm their understanding and compliance with the policy upon induction and again annually as part of their Annual Appraisal. A copy of the written guide 'What to do if you suspect a child is at risk' is available on the shared drive in the following location [Child Protection, what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused.pdf](#)

4.2 ECI's policy and approach for dealing with suspected harm to a child needs to be communicated. The policy will be available on the ECI website and staff must refer service users to the policy appropriately.

5. Recruitment and selection process

5.1 ECI will ensure that any paid member of staff or volunteer recruited to a role which involves work with children or vulnerable adults has been subject to a rigorous selection process including interviews, taking up references (including at least one regarding

previous work with children) and appropriate level criminal record checks, following ECI's 'Procedures for Criminal Record Bureau (DBS) checks'.

- 5.2 No-one will be allowed to work in a situation where they might be alone with children until their DBS check has been satisfactorily completed.
- 5.3 Staff or Volunteers who have lived/worked overseas, for more than 6 months, since the age of 17 years, will need a Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent proof as part of their work visa, from their respective countries.
- 5.4 All staff recruited into roles working directly with children, and then annually thereafter, will sign a declaration stating that they will disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which affect their suitability to work with children. In accordance with section 76 of the Childcare Act 2006, all staff will sign a declaration stating they have not, nor have any member of their household, been disqualified from working with children. Should, from the date of the declaration, there be a disqualification from working with children within the members of the household, this must be immediately reported to the Safe Guarding Lead.

6. Induction and training process

- 6.1 ECI will ensure that all staff, trustees, and volunteers receive the Child Protection Policy and 'What to do if you suspect a child is at risk'. Their reading and understanding of this will be checked as part of the induction process.
- 6.2 Also their project manager will talk through the flow chart and Child Protection Concern Form (Appendix A) so that staff are familiar with it and confident to record their concerns.
- 6.3 ECI will ensure that all staff and volunteers in contact with children have a level of Child Protection Training appropriate to their role, which is updated every two years, ranging from:
Level 1 in-house training in the internal process set out in this policy,
Level 2 training for anyone having contact with children
Level 3 training for staff who work directly with children
Level 4 training for staff with management responsibilities
See individual job descriptions for levels.
- 6.4 All staff will sign their commitment to child protection on induction and again at Annual Appraisal to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, their commitment to safeguarding, and their ongoing training and development in this area. See Induction form and Appraisal Policy.

7. Code of behaviour when working with children

- 7.1 To reduce situations where the abuse of children could take place and to protect staff and volunteers, ECI staff and volunteers will:
- ensure the environment does not allow bullying (physical, verbal or emotional), racism or sexism.
 - never touch a child inappropriately.
 - never be alone with a child in inappropriate situations e.g. in your home or in your car.
 - always be publicly open when working with children.
 - wherever possible involve parents in taking responsibility for their children.
 - seek parental consent before involving children (aged 8+) in activities without their parents.
 - always involve parents in activities with their children if aged under 8.
 - never do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
 - always seek full understanding and consent from parents and the children involved if personal help has to be given because the child has a disability.

- normally work in pairs with children or young people if their parents/carers are not present. If mixed groups of children or young people are being taken away from home (e.g. on a residential weekend), a male and female member of staff should accompany them.
- It is prohibited for any member of staff, or volunteer, to use their personal mobile phone to take pictures of children attending the setting or in the course of their work. Staff or volunteers working directly with children in the setting, or outreach venues, will not be allowed to carry personal mobile phones whilst working. Any staff known or seen to be using a mobile phone will be disciplined.

8. **Health and Safety Checks**

ECI will risk assess all activities and venues to ensure that children are protected from intentional and unintentional harm.

9. **Other related policies**

9.1 This child protection policy is one of several policies adopted by ECI to ensure the safety and well-being of their employees, trustees, volunteers and clients. It should be read and acted upon alongside the following:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Criminal Records Bureau Procedures
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Mobile Image Recording Devices Policy

10. **Prevent Duty Guidance**

10.1 ECI will adhere to the Prevent Duty Guidance specified in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015. This will include;

- Safeguarding children at risk of being drawn into, or harmed by extremism or terrorism.
- Supervision of visitors
- Promotional of fundamental British Values.
- Staff training to enable them to identify children at risk and to challenge extremists, including when to refer to other authorities.

10.2 **Recommendations by Department of Education**

The Prevent Duty guidance from the Department of Education (June 2015) highlights four principle areas for action and ECI will follow these in implementing the guidance within the organisation. These are: -

- **Risk Assessment** – further guidance can be found in the statutory guidance - Working together to safeguard children and Keeping children safe in education.
- **Working in Partnership** - further guidance can be sought from Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).
- **Staff Training** – further guidance can be found from The Home Office, which has developed a core training product for this purpose – Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP).
- **IT Policies** - further guidance on internet safety can be found from UK Safer Internet Centre website.

**EXETER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – APPENDIX ONE
'WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS AT RISK'**

1. What is child abuse?

There are many different types of child abuse and many ways in which abuse can occur. It can happen to children at any stage of development from birth until they are able to act independently. In law, young people are classed as children up to their 18th birthday. The main forms of abuse are:

- **Physical abuse** – where a child is physically hurt, injured or killed. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting. It also includes giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs and alcohol, and attempting suffocation or drowning. In some cases, excessive force may be used when feeding or changing a child's nappy.
- **Sexual abuse** – where children (girls and boys) are sexually abused by adults or other children who use them to meet their own sexual needs. This might be sexual intercourse, and also includes fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and exposing children to pornographic material – including videos.
- **Neglect** – where parents or carers fail to meet the basic and essential needs of their children to have food, clothes, warmth and medical care. Leaving children alone and unsupervised is also an example of neglect. Parents not giving love and affection to their children is an example of emotional neglect.
- **Emotional abuse** – where constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting and shouting can lead to a loss of confidence and self-esteem, making a child nervous and withdrawn, or conversely, displaying challenging behaviour e.g. displays of bullying behaviour similar to that they are victim of.

2. What might make you worry?

- Is the child doing something that is unusual for the child?
- Is the child over-friendly with strangers?
- Do you recognise any or some of the following behaviours in the child?
 - Frequent mood changes.
 - Unusual eating patterns e.g. always hungry.
 - Change in appearance.
 - Quiet and withdrawn, a loner, under confident.
 - Angry, short attention span, attention seeking, under confident.
 - Never wants to go home.
 - Tired looking.
 - Seductive behaviour.
 - Frequent bruises (particularly on fleshy parts).
 - Gives the impression of being unloved and unhappy.

3. Who might be abusing the child?

Anyone can be an abuser. It might be a parent or carer but it could be a member of the wider family, a family friend, a neighbour, a youth worker, church worker, teacher, play-worker or a volunteer working with children or young people. It could be another child. It could be a member of staff or a volunteer in this organisation.

4. Do's and don'ts

Remember that children are vulnerable individuals who do not always communicate their anxieties or concerns in 'usual' ways. This is particularly important if a child has special needs or disabilities.

If you suspect child abuse:

Do tell your line manager or the person who organises or supervises your project.	Don't examine the child.
Do realise that your concerns could be significant and should be passed on.	Don't ask leading questions – allow the child to tell their own story.

If the child tells you something has happened:

Do allow the child to do the talking.	Don't postpone or delay the opportunity to listen.
Do listen – take the child seriously.	Don't ask leading questions.
Do remain calm and caring.	Don't allow your own feelings (such as anger, pity or shock) to surface.
Do allow the child to finish.	Don't make false promises (e.g. that you will keep 'the secret').
Do record the conversation as soon as possible afterwards using the child's own words.	Don't interpret what you have been told; just record it.
Do refer to your project manager and ECIs Safeguarding Lead.	
Do share your concerns – you are not expected to handle it alone.	
Do tell the child what you are going to do. Communicate with the child in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding, language preference and abilities.	

5. Is the information offered confidential?

No. All information should be recorded on the Child Protection Concern Form. The information will be passed to children's services if a referral is made. If a referral is not made, concerns should still be shared with the family. Professionals working with the family also need to be aware of previous concerns. A strategy to manage the sharing of information should be formed with the Safeguarding Lead.

6. How do I know whether it is definitely child abuse?

Naming the concern as 'child abuse' is less important than assessing the level of risk posed to the child. You may feel unsure in your judgement, the Safeguarding Lead and / or the MASH will be able to advise on whether there needs to be a referral made to Children's Services. You can have an anonymous discussion about your concerns without disclosing the identity of the family at this stage.

You may have this discussion with either of the following:

ECI's Safeguarding Leads are currently Ann Brandrick, Sallie Horner and Clare Edmonds.

At this stage do not discuss your concerns further with a potential abuser, even if they are the parents or carers. Doing this could put the child at greater risk of harm.

7. Making a referral.

If the discussion with the Safeguarding Lead / MASH concludes that there is a risk to the child; at this point you will be required to share your personal details and those of the child and family you are referring. Give all the information you have no matter how insignificant it might seem. When referring a child to Children's Services consider and include any information you have on the child, their developmental needs and their parents'/carers' ability to respond to these needs within the context of their wider family and environment. To refer to the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) contact the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). **The main MASH referral number is 0345 1551071.** You can contact CYPS direct (Tel: 01392 384444 9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am – 4pm Friday) or the Emergency Duty Team (Tel: 0845 6000388 5pm – 9am and weekends) or the police.

If a referral is accepted by MASH an investigation into the child's situation takes place at once. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence of an individual may be required in a Court of Law.

Whether the conclusion is that the child is or is not at risk, every effort should be made to handle information discreetly for the benefit of the child and their family by working openly and in partnership with parents or carers and other professionals. This helps identify lower level needs and appropriate action can still be taken. It encourages the spirit of cooperation that makes it easier to share information, which is important when child abuse is suspected. The Safeguarding Lead will be able to offer you practice supervision to manage information sharing appropriately.

8. Everyone working for ECI should:

- Be familiar with and follow ECI's procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding children and know who to contact in ECI if you have concern about a child's welfare (see flowchart (Appendix B) and Child Protection Concern Form (Appendix A)).
- Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation so don't do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking the child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.
- When you make a referral, agree with the recipient of the referral what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when.
- Record all concerns, discussions about the child, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions. If you make a referral by telephone, confirm it in writing within 24 hours. Children's Services should acknowledge your written referral within one working day of receiving it so if you have not heard back within 3 working days, contact Children's Services again.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Lead is kept informed and up-to-date. (If the concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead, inform the Chief Executive of ECI about your concerns and contact the MASH).
- Ensure that the Chief Executive is informed if the issue involves allegations against an ECI member of staff or volunteer, or you or the Safeguarding Lead believe the issue has the

potential to be the subject of significant media interest, or is likely to bring ECI into disrepute

9. Guidance on information sharing for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

It is rare for the law or professional codes of conduct to provide an absolute barrier to disclosure. The simplest way of viewing information sharing is:

If you suspect a child is at risk of abuse, all information needs to be shared with Devon Children's Services and / or the police.

If you do not suspect that the child is at risk of abuse, but you still have concerns about their needs, then you should work, with the parent's or carer's consent (if the child is under 16), with other professionals to address the need.

You may be anxious about the legal or ethical restrictions on sharing information, particularly with other agencies. A failure to pass on information that might prevent a tragedy could expose you to criticism in the same way as an unjustified disclosure. You should be aware of the main pieces of legislation concerning disclosure of information. These are:

- Common law duty of confidence (See box below)
- Human Rights Act 1998 (See below)
- Data Protection Act 1998 (see below)

Common Law Duty of Confidence

The courts have found a duty of confidence to exist where –

- *a contract provides for information to be kept confidential*
- *there is a special relationship between parties, such as patient and doctor, solicitor and client, teacher and pupil*
- *an agency or government department, such as Inland Revenue, collects and holds personal information for the purposes of its functions.*

The duty is not absolute. Disclosure can be justified if –

- *the information shared is not confidential in nature*
- *the person to whom the duty is owed has expressed or implicitly authorised the disclosure*
- *there is an overriding public interest in disclosure*
- *disclosure is required by a court order or other legal obligation*

Anyone who receives information, knowing it is confidential, is also subject to a duty of confidence. Whenever you give or receive information in confidence you should ensure there is clear understanding as to how it may be used or shared.

A young person aged 16 or over, or a child under 16 who has the capacity to understand and make their own decisions, may give (or refuse) consent to a disclosure. Otherwise a person with parental responsibility should consent on their behalf.

If consent to sharing the information is refused, you will need to decide if the circumstances justify the disclosure, taking into account what is being disclosed, for what purposes and to whom.

The key factor in deciding whether or not to disclose confidential information is proportionality. The amount of confidential information disclosed and the number of people to whom it is disclosed should be no more than is strictly necessary to meet the public interest in protecting the health and well-being of a child (the 'need to know' basis). The approach should be the same whether the information is being shared internally within an organisation or between agencies.

Information Sharing Guidelines from the Government, as displayed on the DSCB website – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people and carer's. (March 2015)

Human Rights Act 1998

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights recognises a right for respect for private and family life. However this right is not absolute. Disclosing information to protect the welfare of a child might disrupt private and family life but may be justified under article 8. The same 'proportionality' test applies.

Data Protection Act 1998

If you are disclosing personal data you should comply with the principles of the Act but these should not be an obstacle if:

- *you have particular concerns about the welfare of the child - and*
- *you disclose information to Children's Services or another professional - and*
- *the disclosure is justified under the common law duty of confidence*

10. If your concern relates to a member of staff or a volunteer.

- Inform and discuss your concerns with your project manager, and inform the ECI Chief Executive
- Refer to ECI's Whistleblowing policy
- Ensure that the Chief Executive is informed if the issue involves allegations against an ECI member of staff or volunteer, or you or the Safeguarding Lead believe the issue has the potential to be the subject of significant media interest, or is likely to bring ECI into disrepute
- If the person to whom the concern relates is your project manager, inform and discuss your concerns with the person above him/her.
- Whether a referral is to be made or not always inform the Safeguarding Lead of your concerns, and, always complete a Child Protection Concern Form (Appendix A) to record the issues raised.
- Any safeguarding concerns regarding a member of staff or volunteer will be reported to the **Local Authority Designated Officer – 01392 384964 or online referral and Ofsted – General Enquiries – 0300 123 1231 or Whistleblowing Hotline – 0300 123 3155 or whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk**
- In the event of a disqualification of a person employed in the Children's Centres, we will not continue to employ that person (Section 76 of the Childcare Act 2006). This will include any member of staff living in the same household as a disqualified person.

- A member of staff or volunteer may be suspended while appropriate investigations take place. These could include criminal, child protection and disciplinary investigations.
- Inform the parent or carer of the actions being taken while investigations take place.
- The usual ECI disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the Disciplinary Policy. These may be influenced by the outcome of investigations by the Police and/or CYPS.
- Contact the MASH to discuss your concern.

11. Where can you find more information?

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act (2004); and in line with government publications: "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015), "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" (2010), "What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused" (2015), Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, (2016)

For more information visit;

www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org

Appendix A

Exeter Community Initiatives Child Protection Concern Form (as at 7thFeb 2011)

Name of Person Filling out this form:

To be completed each time a <u>new</u> concern is raised in relation to a child	
1) All known personal details of the child, for example: Name of Child Date Of Birth Addresses of child, parent / carers and other relevant family members.	
2) Personal details of all other relevant people e.g. the person who poses a risk to the child.	
3) Name of person raising the concern (e.g. parent, ECI member of staff, or volunteer). What is this persons relationship to the child?	
4) Are there other professionals involved with the child and family?	
5) Provide full and accurate details of the issues and concerns. To include details of any persons believed to pose a risk to the child, in the event of a disclosure: the exact words used by the child,	
6) Record of Discussion with Safeguarding Lead (in absence of Safeguarding Lead, the discussion should take place with the MASH Consultants The main number is 0345 1551071 email mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk	

7) Immediate action to be taken, and by whom. (e.g. monitor and record, referral to police, or referral to MASH,, liaison with other agencies, discussion with the family, inform ECI CEO).	
8) What is Children's Services involvement with this child: open / closed, any history?	
9) Agreed strategy to monitor the situation and protect the child (e.g. how will; the family be informed about our concerns? Set frequency of visits / contact with the family, arrangement of multi-agency meeting, referral to further agencies).	

Date form was completed	
Signature of person raising concern	
Signature of Line Manager or Line Manager's Line Manager.	
Signature of Child Protection Lead	

Appendix B

Child Protection Flow chart (as at 4th May 2017)

